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U.S. assails Viet regime in Cambodia

From Inquirer Wire Services

BANGKOK, Thailand — Secretary of State George P. Shultz yesterday condemned Vietnam's "illegal and arrogant" occupation of Cambodia as he met with three guerrilla leaders fighting Vietnamese troops in that country and promised more aid for Cambodian refugees.

Shultz's comments came as group of non-communist nations in Southeast Asia called on Vietnam to begin indirect talks with the Cambodian resistance groups.

These moves, as well as Shultz's scheduled visit today to the Thai-Cambodian border region, seemed designed to focus greater attention on Vietnam's continuing occupation of Cambodia in hopes that more nations would contribute aid to the resistance movement and to Thailand's efforts to deal with the huge new influx of refugees.

Shultz met two leaders of the non-communist Khmer People's National Liberation Front — military commander-in-chief Gen. Sak Sutsakhan and Abdul Gaffar — and with Prince Norodom Ranariddh, whose father, former Cambodian head of state Prince Norodom Sihanouk, heads another non-communist Cambodian resistance group.

Those two groups are in a loose coalition with a third rebel faction, the communist Khmer Rouge, whose regime in Cambodia was ousted by the Vietnamese and replaced by a pro-Hanoi administration soon after Vietnam invaded Cambodia in late 1978.

A senior State Department official said that the three resistance leaders presented a "a strikingly positive attitude" to Shultz despite a Vietnamese offensive early this year that wiped out almost every guerrilla camp along the border.

"They made no pretense of evicting Vietnam militarily from Cambodia but of exerting pressure on Vietnam to bring it to the negotiating table," said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Earlier, during a meeting with Thai officials, Shultz signed a pledge to provide an extra \$3 million a year for Thai villages that face frequent shelling and cross-border raids by Vietnamese troops based in Cambodia, as well as a heavy influx of refugees.

Shultz used the signing ceremony as an opportunity to condemn what he called the "arrogant and illegal" occupation of Cambodia by Vietnamese troops.

About 230,000 Cambodian refugees have fled into Thailand, imposing a huge economic and social burden on about 90 border villages. Most of the U.S. funds will go toward improving farming, education and transportation in those hamlets.

Beyond the humanitarian concerns, Shultz said, "we are all aware of the strategic and political importance of Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. We are also aware that Soviet support makes it possible."

More than 160,000 Vietnamese troops are in Cambodia, supporting a government installed by Vietnam. This has created fears in the region among non-Communist neighbors such as Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

On another issue, a State Department official with Shultz declined to comment on a newspaper report yesterday that the CIA has been covertly providing millions of dollars since 1982 to two of the three non-communist Cambodian resistance groups.

The Washington Post quoted unnamed, informed sources in Washington as saying that the aid was "non-lethal," but that U.S. Central Intelligence Agency officers work closely with Thai military men who advise the insurgents.

The sources told the newspaper the aid is funneled through Thailand and included more than \$5 million this year.

Shultz arrived in Bangkok yesterday to begin a week-long visit to Southeast Asia. He flies to the Thai-

Cambodian border today, when he will meet with Cambodian refugees and with frontline Thai military commanders.

He did say yesterday that the United States was pleased with Vietnam's announcement over the weekend that it would turn over to the United States the remains of 26 Americans killed in the Vietnam War.

But he said Washington regarded this as a "separate humanitarian issue" and would not link it to Vietnam's presence in Cambodia and other issues.

At a meeting yesterday in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) called on Vietnam to start indirect talks with the Cambodian resistance. The proposal, aimed at a political settlement of the Cambodian conflict, made formal an approach that had been floated in principle by ASEAN members and already has been rejected by the Vietnamese.

The Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, the political front of the resistance forces, has accepted the idea, ASEAN foreign ministers said in a statement released at their annual meeting. The ASEAN countries are Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines and Brunei.

The Vietnamese, anticipating the proposal, rejected it last week in a statement distributed by the official Vietnam news agency. However, ASEAN officials said they would disregard the news agency report and wait for direct word from Hanoi.